

Launching an entirely new approach to ocean research, NOAA and our scientific and academic partners, have created three research centers in Washington, South Carolina and Michigan. The centers will study how people affect the oceans and Great Lakes and how, in turn, those bodies of water affect human health. As critical links in the emerging global earth observation system, the three centers will be strong contributors to broadening knowledge about health worldwide. The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences is actively engaged in building the global system.

Directors of the new centers are Dr. Usha Varanasi, head of NOAA's National Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle; Dr. Fred Holland, director of Hollings Marine Laboratory in Charleston; and Dr. Stephen Brandt, director of the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Ann Arbor.

Each center will focus on a range of issues -- beach safety, seafood quality, coastal pollution, and marine toxins and pathogens, among others. Staff will work collaboratively with four new research centers established by the National Science Foundation and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences.

Establishment of the centers is a cornerstone of NOAA's Oceans and Human Health Initiative. Created by Congress last year, this initiative includes internal and external peer-reviewed research, a distinguished scholars and traineeship program, and the three centers. Each center will receive just over \$2 million for the first year, with much of that going to external partners. Total funding for the initiative in FY03 and FY04 is \$18 million. The remainder of the funding will go to the external grants program, the distinguished scholars and traineeship programs, internal research and education and outreach.

<http://www.ogp.noaa.gov/mpe/oh>

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr." in a cursive script.

Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and
NOAA Administrator